

ART WORK IN HISTORIC SIKH SHRINES: NEED FOR DOCUMENTATION AND CONSERVATION

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ABSTRACT

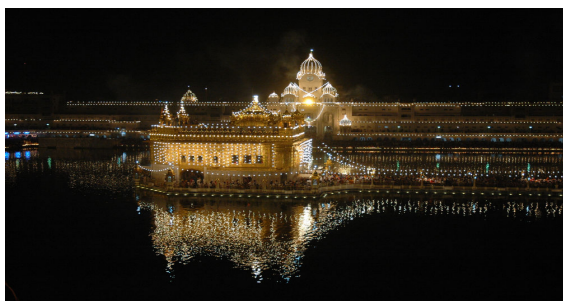
The concept of conservation of Heritage has not yet received much significance in the third world countries. These countries are having very rich heritage but in a neglected state. Heritage includes both built & natural components. Even the concept of documentation with latest scientific techniques is not known in these countries in general & Sikh Shrines in particular. Sikh Shrines popularly known as *Gurudwaras* have special status in Sikh religion. The religion is unique because of various unique elements. These elements or features can be understood from the study of the Sikh temple. The important components of Sikh temple include: Temple, *Sarovar* (water body), *Langar* (free community kitchen), *free serai* (rest house). The temple has four entries meaning thereby that people of all the four castes can enter or people from all the directions i.e. North, East, South & West, can have the access to the temple. The *sarovar* is symbol of nectar. There are many Sikh Shrines all over the world. The present paper is related to the historic Sikh Shrines adorned with various art forms mainly situated in India.

The various art forms include '*Jaratkari*' (inlaid stone) *Mohrakashi* (frescos, murals or wall paintings), *Gatch work* (is a kind of stone -lime stone or gypsum). *Tukri work* (pieces of glass), *gold embossing* and floor patterns. The paper highlights the philosophy behind these art forms, the society of the period, values, art skills and the personality of the people of the period.

The art work is mainly the contribution of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who ruled Punjab from 1802-1839 AD. It was only Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time, Sikhism had Royal Patronage and the Sikhs started devoting themselves to the magnificence and splendour of their shrines. The paper traces briefly the history of art forms & their techniques. These are mainly seen in Golden Temple in Amritsar, *Darbar Sahib in Tarn Taran*, *Hazoor Sahib in Nanded*, *Baba Atal Rai in Amritsar* & *Dera Sahib in Lahore, Pakistan*. The paper identified the present scenario of these art works which is pathetic. The frescoes are not restored in a proper way. Either cement plaster has been used on the frescos and then Gold embossed plates have been fixed. At some places plastic stickers have been used. Although craftsmen are available but acrylic paints are used which does not have the soothing effect and harmony with the traditional artwork. Moreover the scientific documentation techniques are still not used. The low cost documentation and recording techniques are required so that these art forms in general and frescoes in particular can be restored in their original form. The paper covers all such issues and suggests guidelines for their documentation & conservation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance and value of heritage has been recognized all over the world but it has yet to receive the desired attention in the third world countries especially Indian continent. India has rich heritage in its vast spatial territory. It is famous for its unity in spite of vast cultural diversity. Heritage includes language, dress, literature, life style, eating habits and building/areas. The focus of paper in hand is restricted to only the built heritage and that too to the art work of Historic Sikh Shrines. The paper is based on mainly research project of University Grants Commission on "*Documentation of the Art Work of Sri Harimandir Sahib with special emphasis on floral designs*" and reconnaissance survey of other shrines.



Sri Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar: Festive occasion

2. SIKH SHRINES: BASIC PHILOSOPHY

Sikh shrines popularly known as "*Gurudwara*". Gurudwara has a special status in Sikh religion. It is the house of God, the

house where Guru dwells. It is combination of two words "*Guru*" i.e. "God" and "*dwara* i.e. "door/entry". The most essential element of Gurudwara is the presence of Guru. The Guru is the holy book i.e. "*Sri Granth Sahib*". It is the living Guru.

2.1 Concept:

Sikh religion came into existence at a time when the society was facing many problems such as the rigid caste system, plundering and attacks by Mughals, social inequality etc. Basically, it is a based on the concept of social service, against injustice, for quality and so on. The concept is visible from the components of a Sikh temple known as *Gurudwara*.

2.2 Components of Gurudwara:

Sikh temple consists of various components and all have an integrated relationships. The important components are: Main Shrine, *Sarovar* (water body), *Langar* (free community kitchen), *Serai* (place for stay in), *Jora Ghar* (place for keeping shoes) and *Gathri Ghar* (Cloak room). All these are very essential components of any Sikh Gurudwara. Some of these even depict the concept of equality. In other words, they depict the way caste system got a setback e.g. Sikh Shrines have four entries or gates which means people of all the castes can enter in the shrines which was not so at the time when the concept was introduced and prevailing in the society. The concept of free community kitchen is another landmark in the form of equality i.e. people of all castes will have to sit on the floor and eat together. The concept of *Sarovar* is another indication

towards the same direction i.e. it's the nectar and anyone can dip in it irrespective of caste, religion or economic status.

2.3 Art Work - Evolution in Punjab:

The land of Punjab has often witnessed invasions and political upheavals in its history. Owing to this, the people have seldom experienced peace for a long time and have been sufferers of war and destruction. Nevertheless, they have had a taste for beauty and art perhaps because of their land being in such a location which is surrounded by natural forms and beauty and also because of it being a primarily agrarian society. Punjabis are also known for their tradition of beautiful crafts and folklore which have been famous and popular worldwide. Region, religion and rituals are collective determination of art.

Although rich in different arts, the visual arts for religious worship could not get boost because of the Sikh's belief and ban against idol worship. The mighty Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1802-1839 AD) brought a tide of changes in Punjab. Apart from enjoying peace, the Punjabis now started feeling more settled and at rest. They started taking keen interest in exploring their artistic expressions too. During this period, Sikhism has royal patronage and the Sikhs started devoting themselves to the magnificence and splendour of their shrines. Use of foliage and floral designs, now started appearing in the decoration of the holy shrines.

With the overall development taking place in Punjab now, the dawn of 19th century saw the rise and development of art of painting too. Ranjit Singh's rule in this era has been termed as a period of artistic and cultural renaissance in Punjab. The power of wealth of Ranjit Singh attracted the surrounding *Pahari* (hilly) painters too. By the early 19th century *Kangra* Schools of Art was at decline. *Kangra* and surrounding hill states were conquered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the artists were attracted towards the plains as lavish patronage for art was extended by the Maharaja. Thus came into being the Sikh School of Art. In the first half of 19th century, the works executed show a mark of *Kangra* style. Wall paintings existed not only in temples and cenotaphs but also in *havelis* (private houses with courtyard), *dharamshalas* (guest house), *akharas* (centres of learning) and other buildings.

3. HISTORIC SIKH SHRINES & VARIOUS ART WORKS

Sikh shrine and Gurudwara is compounded of *Guru* (Guide or Master) and *Dwara* (gateway or seat) and therefore has an architectural connotation. Sikh shrines are by and large commemorative buildings connected with the Sikh Gurus, in some way or with places and events of historic significance. Thus, in this paper, only few historical sikh shrines with art work have been covered. Detailed analysis about the art work of Sri Harimandir Sahib has been illustrated. These historic sikh shrines include *Sri Harimandir Sahib* (Golden Temple) in Amritsar, *Baba Atal Rai* in Amritsar, *Darbar Sahib* in Tarn Taran, *Hazoor Sahib* in Nanded and *Dera Sahib* in Lahore (Pakistan).

Amritsar, the city founded by the 4th Guru of Sikhs, Guru Ramdas in 1577 AD. Harimandir Sahib is the landmark around which the city developed. The city is located in North-West of India at a distance of about 465 kms from capital city New Delhi. The city is well linked by rail, road and air.

Harimandir Sahib is located in the walled city. It is a spiritual centre of Sikhs. It has always been a focal point of the Sikh faith. According to David Ross "Victories of Ranjit Singh enabled him to do much towards beautifying the temple and the

city". Among the Sikhs, it was regarded as an act of virtue to contribute something to the adornment of their sacred shrine.

It is stated in one inscription on the main door of Sri Harimandir Sahib that Maharaja Ranjit Singh entrusted the whole work of decoration of the temple to Bhai Sant Singh Giani of *Chiniot* (now in Pakistan). S. Kehar Singh was one of the leading artists associated with adornment work. His two nephews S. Kishan Singh and S. Bishan Singh also played an important part. S. Bishan Singh's two sons Nihal Singh and Jwala Singh also followed in the footsteps of their father. S. Gian Singh Naqqash was another important artist who contributed greatly in this work. S. Harbhajan Singh and his two sons are now working upon the art work in Sri Harimandir Sahib. The various art forms which add to the ornamentation of this spiritual centre particularly & other spiritual centres in general include:

3.1 Jaratkari (inlaid stone):

This art form comprises of various interesting designs by inlaying different kinds and colours of stones in marble. The first impression of this rich art form is, as one approaches the main shrine from the causeway. While upper portion of the wall is clad in gold, the lower portion is dressed in white marble which is adorned with rich inlays of stones forming various intricate and interesting patterns.

The jaratkari craftsmanship reminds one of the "pietra-dura" tradition and somewhat reminds the Munhall technique used for decoration but unlike latter, animal, fruits and some human figures have also been displayed along with floral designs. The sikh artists seem to have taken these motifs from the vedantic concept of life. The main components of inlaid stone include: flowers, leaves, human figures, fruits and animals. This type of art work can be seen to some extent in *Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran* & *Hazoor Sahib* in Nanded.



Jaratkari: Hazoor Sahib, Nanded

The artist would first draw the design on the marble slab cut to size. It was then etched to some depth, by the stone-engraver, with the help of small, pointed tools. The next stage was to cut and finish the inlay stones which were finally placed into the finely etched-out patterns in the marble slab by the 'begaria' (coloured stone-designer). White mortar was used to lay the stone in place.

3.2 Mohrakashi (frescos)

Mohrakashi is the art of 'Frescos'. Different from a 'secco' (where the plaster is allowed to dry before working upon), a 'fresco' is a mural painting when it is still wet. Most of this

work can be located on the walls & ceiling of the staircase leading to the first floor, the first floor hall, ceiling of windows of upper hall, underside of wall brackets and upper walls of 'Darshani Deorhi'. History speaks of all the lower portion of walls of 'Darshani Deorhi' too being full of decorations of mohrakashi paintings, but these got lost in the course of time and got superseded by marble slabs. This art form can also be seen in Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran, Hazoor Sahib Nanded, Dera Sahib in Lahore, Pakistan. It is used in Baba Atal Rai Shrine in Amritsar and the whole life of Guru Nanak Dev (the first Guru of Sikhs) has been depicted with the help of this technique on the walls & ceiling of first floor.

First sketch was prepared on a thick paper in pencil or charcoal. The wall area wetted with water was then covered with lime plaster ('pora'). Pora was then given a thick layer of 'doga' made of burnt and drenched marble. Doga when still wet, the intended design was transferred on it through perforation process, with the help of charcoal dust sprinkled over the paper design. Once the design was copied on the wet plaster, intended colours were filled into the plaster by means of small wooden shovel called 'nehta'. When colours still wet, further coatings were given for more perfect details and finishing. The colours were prepared from natural material according to the needs of the craftsman.

3.3 Gatch (lime/gypsum)

This unique and excellent art work can be seen on the first floor of the central shrine, while in the upper hall, religious prayers, 'Jaap Sahib', 'Japuji Sahib', 'Anand Sahib', are inscribed on the arches in this manner. This art work is also applied in Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran and Hazoor Sahib in Nanded.

Gatch is a kind of stone (lime stone or gypsum) which was heated in fire, powered and sieved. By adding water, as much paste was formed as could be used in one sitting. The paste was first applied and then with the help of sharp tools, it was scratched to form the design while still wet and soft. It was then painted yellow and gold laminates applied over it.



Gatch Work: religious prayers

3.4 Tukri (mirror piece)

Art form consisting of inlaying mirror pieces into Gatch work is known as 'Tukri'. This was most widely used by the Mughals in their palaces and forts, forming 'Shish Mahals'. This work can be located in the ceiling of the upper hall in Harimandir Sahib and also in Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran & Hazoor Sahib in Nanded.

Pieces of glass (tukri) were covered with mercury oxide on the upper side to convert them into mirror. A tool called 'krund' was used to do the cutting. A very distinctive feature of this art

work is that in Sri Harimandir Sahib, Gatch has not only been inlaid with tukri but also with precious stones.

3.5 Gold Embossing:

This art form consisting of various beautiful patterns can be located on the upper portion of the outer walls of the main shrine, the ceiling inside and in the 'Darshani Deorhi'. It has also been applied in Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran & Hazoor Sahib in Nanded and at some places in Baba Atal Rai & Dera Sahib Lahore.

In this technique, first the drawing is prepared which is then transferred on to copper plates, on the reverse, by embossing. The gold leaves are pressed on them which then get the impression of the design below.

4. DOCUMENTATION OF VARIOUS ART FORMS

The various art forms, as discussed above, have been studied, analyzed and documented in Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar so as to form a complete picture of them. Details such as their location, sizes, colours and finery form a part of this study, as is discussed below:

4.1 Jaratkari:

The Jaratkari form of artwork is constituted of various patterns laid in marble. Executed in different sizes and colours, it can be seen up to a height of 10'6", from the plinth, along the external facades of the main shrine and in the Darshani Deorhi.

4.1.1 Principles of Composition: The patterns are set in different panels of various sizes like 43 1/2" x 34", 21 1/2" x 14 1/2", 43 1/2" x 13". The central panel is the largest in dimension, which is flanked by slender and rectangular side panels. The corner panels are square. All these panels are recessed from the surface of the marble by about 1/2". Most of the panels are framed with two outer strips of border and an inner cusped border, which highlights the pattern more, apart from imparting it more beauty. These cusped borders are further highlighted with bright flower on the top of the central tip. Between the two outer borders, the marble at the bottom is carved out to form the base of a pilaster. The patterns within the borders are laid in such a manner that they are symmetrical about the vertical axis. The total number of panels on all the four walls of the main shrine are as:

South wall: 28 panels, 14 on either side of door
North wall: 26 panels, 14, 12 on either side
East wall: 20 panels, 14, 6 on either side
West wall: 28 panels, 14 on either side

4.1.2 Colours and Shades: The flowers, leaves, fruits, birds, animals and some human figures shown in the panels, in the Jaratkari technique are laid in resplendent and varied colours forming a multi-chromatic collage.

The patterns formed are of red, ochre, pink and royal blue coloured flowers having slender green stems. Beautiful effects have been given to the leaves with different shades of green. The colours imparted to fruits, birds, and animals resemble their actual colours as found in nature. The borders are black in colour.

4.1.3 Types of Details: Some of the flowers are bell shaped while others are round in shape. These are either shown from the top or from the side. The buds are oblong in shape. Leaves

are either linear, pectinate or lanceolate. Some of the flowers are shown with fine details of slender stamens rising from the corolla.

The flower vases holding these beautiful bunches of flowers are also of different shapes viz. – tumble shape, pot shape, onion shape, semi-circular shape and so on. These two have been intricately decorated with varied coloured stones to form a part of whole composition.

The various components and their combinations, as can be seen in these panels can be grouped as: **Flowers and Leaves:** This set of composition laid in marble comprise of flowers and leaves only, beautifully set in a multicoloured mosaic. A bunch of flowers with delicate stems emanate from a vase with the stem criss-crossing each other, sometimes rising up and sometimes dropping down beautifully. At places, the flowers, stems and leaves intermingle with each other to form beautiful creepers. Some of the panels have got very fine carving in marble showing leaves and flowers in white. Small honey bees can also be seen in some of these patterns. **Flowers, Leaves and Birds:** This set of composition comprises of flowers, leaves and birds. The birds such as peacocks and sparrows of different species and colours highlight the skills of the craftsmen and enhances the aesthetics of the floral designs. To make the scenes more realistic, the peacocks are shown with snake in their beaks while some of the birds have stems of plants in their beaks. Some birds are shown sitting while the others are shown flying.

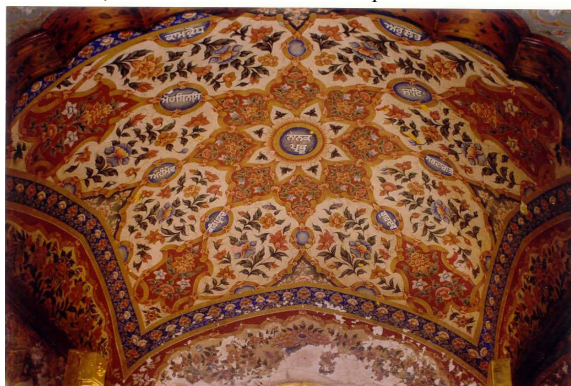
Jaratkari work in this category shows simple and yet an elegant arrangement of flowers and leaves in both horizontal and vertical panels. Cusped border frames the intricate composition, which in turn further framed by double rectangular frames of black stones. **Flowers, Fruits, Leaves, Birds and Animals:** In this category, all the components are placed together in a very cohesive style. The flowers, leaves and fruits form an intricate pattern all over, the animals are shown at the bottom and the birds are shown either in the middle or at the top. The fruits shown in this art form include green and black grapes and some resemble strawberries. The birds include sparrows, peacocks and parrots while the animals include deers, stags, foxes and lions. Animals are shown both in static and motion postures e.g. lion attacking a stag. Small honey bees can be seen in some compositions.

Trees of various forms like a pyramid or with drooping branches form different unique patterns. **Flowers, Leaves, Birds, Animals, Fruits and Human Figures:** In this category of pattern layout, the attempt is to create more natural and realistic scenes by showing all the components of nature together. A dense bunch of beautiful, multi-coloured flowers, spreading out of a vase and bordered along with meandering, blooming creepers is laid out in a very immaculate manner. Birds like parrots in sitting posture and parrots flying high glorify the scene even more. This also shows a saint with a white beard. Deers, lions and stags are shown at the bottom. Fruits include water melons pierced with knife, mangoes and grapes. **Fruits and Birds:** This pattern of Jaratkari layout comprises of fruits and birds only. Fruits like melons, grapes and apples are shown in a half open fruit basket. Melons are shown pierced with knives having beautifully ornate handles. Birds sitting beneath the bowl further enhance its beauty.

4.2 Mohrakashi:

The beautiful mural paintings executed in vibrant colours is yet another rare and fine form of art. Mostly floral designs, the *mohrakashi* is executed in mainly three ways.

Though the technique and expression of the art form is similar in all these, the difference lies in its composition.



Mohrakashi with natural pigments: vanishing art

4.2.1 Panel Style: Beautifully composed within rectangular and square panels, this type is located along the *Darshani Deorhi*, staircase, and upper hall of the main shrine. The central panels being bigger, these are bordered with slender longitudinal panels on the sides and horizontal panels on the top. The corners are adorned with square panels. The designs here are so intricate and fine in nature that it seems as if it were block printed. Dark and light shades of the same colour are applied on the flowers and leaves so as to give them light and shade effect. Use of brown, blue, green and white colour is dominant.

4.2.2 Repetitive Style: This form of composition of mural paintings can be seen on the shaft of columns of upper hall, the ceiling of staircase and on the under surface of the cornice. Here a floral unit is repeated over and over to cover the whole area.

4.2.3 Spread Style: This form of composition of mural paintings consists of star-shape pattern together with flowers, spread all over the area. This can be seen on the ceiling of upper hall windows. To further captivate attention and make the devotee able to meditate on *gurbani* without even a *gutka* (a holy book of small size, containing some of Guru's sayings), *Shalokas* (verses) from *Sukhmani Sahib* (verses of fifth Guru) have been inserted within the pattern. One then feels that the whole place is echoing with Guru's sacred verses. Coloured in shades of brown, white, blue and green, the artwork is an exemplary piece of skilled craftsmanship. This ceiling design is of two types-

- i) One consists of a central flower of eight petals with contrasting design emerging in the space within petals
- ii) The other composition consists of a horizontal bigger pattern of flowers with other patterns formed between them.

The main unit consists of repetition of two main patterns, one, a bunch of three flowers painted in streaks of brown and leaves in green; second a smaller infill flowering design in white over dark background.

The whole of the pattern above one window is then framed in a border of blue coloured base having white and brown flowers on it.

The mohrakashi in the upper hall of the main shrine cover the lower portion of the wall and is mostly covered over by plain glass sheet in order to protect them. Here, in only one of the panels a gurdwara is also shown – *Gurudwara Patalpuri, Kiratpur Sahib*. Also seen here are a few animal figures like elephants & swans.

4.3 Gatch Work:

The *Gatch* work is predominantly seen on the ceiling of the first floor of the main shrine. In the first floor hall, religious prayers have been embossed with this technique, on the soffit of the arch leading to it. The prayers include *Japuji Sahib* (verses of first Guru), *Jaap Sahib* (verses of the tenth Guru) (and *Anand Sahib* (verses of third Guru). Each stanza in these verses is enclosed in a separate unit marked by a golden border. Written in golden over red and blue backgrounds, these are further enclosed in golden and blue thick border. At other places, intricate floral patterns form a beautiful spread of the golden Gatch work.

4.4 Tukri Work:

Similarly, *Tukri* (mirrors) inlaid in the Gatch work mostly adorn the ceilings of the upper hall. Mostly round in shape, the size varies according to the flower size of which it forms the centre. The base colour is either blue or red enclosed in golden engravings of different geometric shapes such as star shape, hexagonal shape etc. The ceiling is separated from wall by a beautiful *Gatch* work border engraved in gold colour with blue base. At some places, rectangular frame shows the *Tukri* work depicting mainly flowers in golden colour.

4.5 Gold Embossing:

Covering of gold plates on the outer surface of the main shrine and *Darshani Deorhi* imparts it the name of Golden Temple. Floral designs embossed on these plates form a beautiful, resplendent spread on the walls. This work can also be seen on the ceiling of the main hall and the upper portion of the rear wall of the main shrine. *Sheesh Mahal* on the first floor is the best example.

5. SYMBOLISM & PHILOSOPHY IN SIKH ART

The Sikhs have always been ardent lovers of nature. The Sikh Gurus appreciated various elements of nature in *Gurbani*. The *Adi Granth*, a repository of the images of Sikh Gurus, contains hymns abound in poetic images which are both perceptual and conceptual. The Sikh warriors had to take refuge in forests every now and then to avenge their adversaries which also led to their having a very close contact with nature. Moreover, the plains of Punjab predominantly agrarian and bound by hills in the north must have led to strong bonds with the natural forms like trees, flowers, leaves, birds and animals.

The concept of a close relationship between the nature and human beings is ancient, multifaceted and widespread. For example, the following forms which have been used in the various artworks denote different meanings attached to them such as: i). Vegetation: life & growth. Flowers in general symbolize beauty and transitory nature of life. These are often used to represent the cycle of life, ii). Animals: life, growth, energy and many mythologies, iii). Birds: like peacocks and sparrows symbolize that worldly relations are illusive and human beings are like birds who are perching on the tree for one night (life) only. Moreover, all these depict the simplicity, soberness and patience in the society of that period.

6. PRESENT STATUS

Due to age, weathering effects and casual attitude, these magnificent art forms require special attention to be restored to

their original splendour. These splendid craftsmen skills form a very precious art, cultural and spiritual heritage. It is very pertinent for the present generation to give this valuable treasure to its progeny in its true form. But it has been observed that the following aspects require attention in order to do so. The study of these artworks has shown that each of these require a technical examination in order to either protect these form further damage or to restore them to their original form.

6.1 Jaratkari:

The *jaratkari* work around the outer walls of main shrine is facing mainly the following problems i.e. the changing colour of the marble slabs, missing inlaid stones and the restoration done in an incongruous way. The increasing pollution due to changing land use and increasing traffic is causing harm at fast pace and pedestrianize the surroundings or make them traffic free. There is need to replace the stones as well as marble slabs in harmony with the existing ones.

6.2 Mohrakashi:

The gorgeous *Mohrakashi* work on the walls along the staircase, on first and second floor, has already been damaged to a great extent which needs immediate attention. Along the wall of the one of the staircase leading to first floor, the damaged artwork has been ruthlessly scraped off and thus, it has vanished completely. No doubt, the restoration work done by fixing metal sheets, along the stairs leading to main roof of the shrine, having pure kind of *Mohrakashi* work, on top of the damaged original work looks quite congruous. On the first floor hall of the main shrine, at places glass sheets have been used to cover & protect the original artwork which also is a good attempt. The glass sheets have been fixed in such a manner that it does not look juxtaposed & merges with the artwork but a gorgeous pillar needs attention.



Damaged frescos: Dera Sahib, Lahore

The ceiling and upper portion of side walls in *Darshani Deorhi* which were adorned with minute and ornamental artwork have been plastered & covered with embossed gold plates. Thereby, the unique artwork has been vanished. The underside of the cornice of the main shrine has faced the same treatment. Natural pigments should be used for restoration instead of acrylic paints or stickers. The condition of this work is very poor in *Dera Sahib, Lahore*, where as in *Darbar Sahib, Tarn Taran*, it has been replaced by acrylic paints and in *Baba Atal Rai*, it has been scratched from the ceiling and neglected state at other walls.



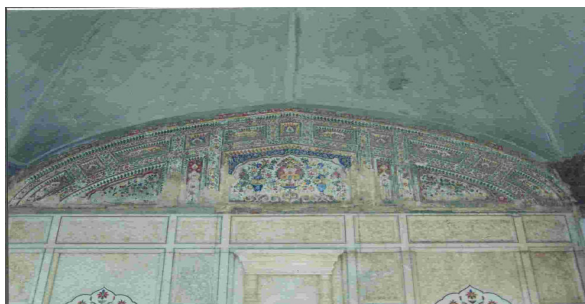
Mohrakashi work: Scratched ceiling

6.3 Gatch & Tukri:

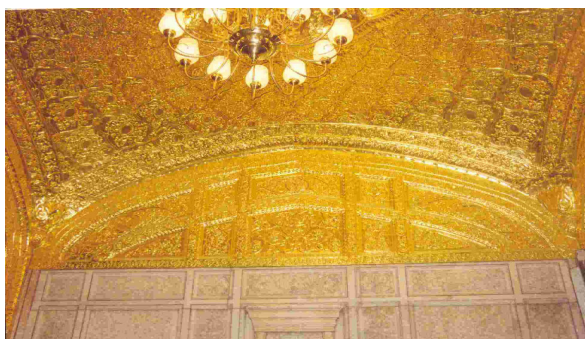
The *Gatch* and *Tukri* work seems better but still at places it is under threat especially under the arch on the first floor of the main shrine the prayers (*Japji Sahib*, *Jaap Sahib* and *Anand Sahib*) need immediate attention. The other threat which at present is not visible but may damage the *Gatch* work on the ceilings of the first floor is due to the covering of the roof with some transparent material for waterproofing. But the rain water as well as moisture trapped inside the transparent sheet will not evaporate instead, it will percolate & may damage the *Gatch* and *Tukri* work on the ceilings below. Use of air conditioners and electronic gadgets are having implications on this work in *Hazoor Sahib*, *Nanded*. This demands scientific study.

6.4 Gold Embossing:

Although it is also very important artwork but it is not wise to plaster the Mohrakashi work with cement and then cover it with gold embossed plates. The practice is entering in a rapid pace.



Mohrakashi intricate patterns: Before



Gold Embossing: After

7. GUIDELINES

The following suggestions can act as guidelines and help in the conservation of this rich architectural and spiritual heritage:-

- i. Measured drawings of each and every art form should be prepared and documented using scientific techniques.
- ii. Sketches and photographs of all the floral designs should be prepared & documented so that they can be restored in their original style.
- iii. Land use changes should not be allowed in the immediate surroundings and declared as traffic free zones.
- iv. Restoration of vanished Mohrakashi artwork with natural pigments, instead of paint, should be preferred because the paints have less life and they give a very shining look (as can be seen in the work on the top of the main shrines as well as in the ceilings of *Sri Akal Takhat Sahib* & *Darbar Sahib*, *Tarn Taran*).
- v. The artwork should be published & printed in the form of cards, pamphlets & souvenirs for spreading awareness amongst public & tourists.
- vi. International Institutes (Getty Conservation) and experts should be consulted for the application of latest techniques for the conservation of this precious spiritual heritage..
- vii. Need to form a committee of qualified experts under the leadership of a conservation professional who can supervise and suggest regular inspection so that the suggestions can be implemented with immediate effect.

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